Texas Department of Insurance
Division of Workers' Compensation
Medical Fee Dispute Resolution, MS-48
7551 Metro Center Drive, Suite 100 • Austin, Texas 78744-1645
518-804-4000 telephone • 512-804-4811 fax • www.tdi.texas.gov

MEDICAL FEE DISPUTE RESOLUTION FINDINGS AND DECISION

GENERAL INFORMATION

Requestor Name and Address

NORTHWEST TEXAS HEALTHCARE
SYSTEM, INC
P O BOX 9633
AMARILLO, TX 79105

DWC Claim #:
Injured Employee:
Date of Injury:
Employer Name:
Insurance Carrier #:

Respondent Name

ST PAUL FIRE & MARINE INSURANCE

Carrier's Austin Representative Box

Box Number 05

MFDR Tracking Number

M4-98-4944-01

REQUESTOR'S POSITION SUMMARY

Requestor's Position Summary: "It is the position of Northwest Texas Hospital that its charges for the claim in question are fair and reasonable and should be paid in full. As provided in Tex. Labor Code §413.011 medical services must be "fair and reasonable" and are to be compensated on that basis. Since the fee guideline was declared void, "fair and reasonable" is the standard of compensating medical providers. The fees charged to the carrier were the same charges that would have been charged to the patient. Additionally, the pricing by Northwest Texas Hospital is 'designed to ensure the quality of medical care and to achieve effective medical cost control.' Tex. Labor Code §413.011. Moreover, Northwest Texas Hospital's charges when compared to other hospitals in the area of comparable size are extremely competitive as evidenced by past comparisons of pricing. Therefore, we would request that the Texas Worker's Compensation Commission approve an additional payment to Northwest Texas Hospital in the amount of $3,106.00 on this claim. This amount represents the difference between the hospital's billed charges for all approved inpatient days on the claims and the valid per diem amounts paid by the insurance carrier pursuant to the now invalid TWCC fee guidelines."

Amount in Dispute: $3,106.00

RESPONDENT'S POSITION SUMMARY

Respondent's Position Summary: "Bills were properly paid pursuant to the per diem rates and other provisions of the 1992 Acute Care Inpatient Hospital Fee Guideline. As described more fully in Exhibit C, the Guideline was developed as a reasonable methodology for fair and reasonable reimbursement for acute care inpatient treatment, while aiming for the cost containment also mandated by the Texas Workers' Compensation Act. While the Guideline was invalidated as a TWCC rule based upon procedural error in its adoption, the per diem rates and methodology of the Guideline remain a valid measure of fair and reasonable reimbursement…The requester has failed to meet its burden to show that the reimbursement received was insufficient under the requirements of the Texas Labor Code. Therefore, Carrier requests a determination that the requester is not entitled to further reimbursement for the dates of service at issue."

Response Submitted by: Flahive, Ogden & Latson, 505 West 12th St., Austin, TX 78711

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Date(s) of Service	Disputed Services	Amount In Dispute	Amount Due
July 23, 1996 Through July 25, 1996	Inpatient Hospital Services	$3,106.00	$0.00

FINDINGS AND DECISION

This medical fee dispute is decided pursuant to Texas Labor Code §413.031 and all applicable, adopted rules of the Texas Department of Insurance, Division of Workers' Compensation.

Background

1. Former 28 Texas Administrative Code §133.305, effective June 3, 1991, 16 *Texas Register* 2830, sets out the procedures for resolving medical fee disputes.
2. Former 28 Texas Administrative Code §134.1(f) effective October 7, 1991, 16 *Texas Register* 5210, sets out the reimbursement guidelines for the services in dispute.
3. This request for medical fee dispute resolution was received by the Division on July 15, 1997.
4. The services in dispute were reduced/denied by the respondent with the following reason codes:
   - F- Payment based on the Assigned Per Diem amount per the Texas hospital fee schedule.
   - G- Payment for these services is included in the Per Diem amount.
   - M- The amount paid is equal to or exceeds the payment required under Texas Workers' Compensation Act (TWCA) statutory standard for payment of medical providers.
   - S- Previously recommended amount has not been changed.

Findings

1. This dispute relates to inpatient hospital services. The former agency's *Acute Care Inpatient Hospital Fee Guideline* at 28 Texas Administrative Code §134.400, 17 *TexReg* 4949, was declared invalid in the case of *Texas Hospital Association v. Texas Workers' Compensation Commission*, 911 *South Western Reporter Second* 884 (Texas Appeals – Austin, 1995, writ of error denied January 10, 1997). As no specific fee guideline existed for acute care inpatient hospital services during the time period that the disputed services were rendered, the 1991 version of 28 Texas Administrative Code §134.1(f) applies as the proper Division rule to address fee payment issues in this dispute, as confirmed by the Court's opinion in *All Saints Health System v. Texas Workers' Compensation Commission*, 125 *South Western Reporter Third* 96 (Texas Appeals – Austin, 2003, petition for review denied). 28 Texas Administrative Code §134.1(f), effective October 7, 1991, 16 *Texas Register* 5210, requires that "Reimbursement for services not identified in an established fee guideline shall be reimbursed at fair and reasonable rates as described in the Texas Workers' Compensation Act, sec. 8.21(b), until such period that specific fee guidelines are established by the commission."
2. The former Texas Workers' Compensation Act section 8.21 was repealed, effective September 1, 1993 by Acts 1993, 73rd Legislature, chapter 269, section 5(2). Therefore, for services rendered on or after September 1, 1993, the applicable statute is the former version of Texas Labor Code section 413.011(b), Acts 1993, 73rd Legislature, chapter 269, section 1, effective September 1, 1993, which states, in pertinent part, that "Guidelines for medical services fees must be fair and reasonable and designed to ensure the quality of medical care and to achieve effective medical cost control. The guidelines may not provide for payment of a fee in excess of the fee charged for similar treatment of an injured individual of an equivalent standard of living and paid by that individual or by someone acting on that individual's behalf. The commission shall consider the increased security of payment afforded by this subtitle."
3. Review of the submitted documentation finds that:
   - The requestor's position statement asserts that "It is the position of Northwest Texas Hospital that its charges for the claim in question are fair and reasonable and should be paid in full. As provided in Tex. Labor Code §413.011 medical services must be "fair and reasonable" and are to be compensated on that basis. Since the fee guideline was declared void, "fair and reasonable" is the standard of compensating medical providers. The fees charged to the carrier were the same charges that would have been charged to the patient. Additionally, the pricing by Northwest Texas Hospital is 'designed to ensure the quality of medical care and to achieve effective medical cost control.' Tex. Labor Code §413.011. Moreover, Northwest Texas Hospital's charges when compared to other hospitals in the area of comparable size are extremely competitive as evidenced by past comparisons of pricing. Therefore, we would request that the Texas Worker's Compensation Commission approve an additional payment to Northwest Texas Hospital in

the amount of $3,106.00 on this claim. This amount represents the difference between the hospital's billed charges for all approved inpatient days on the claims and the valid per diem amounts paid by the insurance carrier pursuant to the now invalid TWCC fee guidelines."

- The requestor did not explain or submit documentation to support its assertion that the pricing by Northwest Texas Hospital is designed to ensure the quality of medical care and to achieve effective medical cost control.
- The requestor did not submit "past comparisons of pricing" or other documentation to support the requestor's assertion that Northwest Texas Hospital's charges, when compared to other hospitals in the area of comparable size, are extremely competitive.
- Regardless of whether the hospital billed its usual and customary charges or whether the charges were comparable to charges billed by other hospitals for similar services, no documentation was found to support that the amount charged for the disputed services represents a fair and reasonable reimbursement for the specific services in dispute.
- The Division finds that a reimbursement methodology based upon payment of a hospital's billed charges, or a percentage of billed charges, does not produce an acceptable payment amount. Such a reimbursement methodology would leave the ultimate reimbursement in the control of the hospital, thus defeating the statutory objective of effective cost control and the statutory standard not to pay more than for similar treatment of an injured individual of an equivalent standard of living. It also provides no incentive to contain medical costs. Therefore, a reimbursement amount that is calculated based upon a percentage of a hospital's billed charges cannot be favorably considered when no other data or documentation was submitted to support that the payment amount being sought is a fair and reasonable reimbursement for the services in dispute.
- The requestor did not submit documentation to support that the payment amount being sought is a fair and reasonable rate of reimbursement for the disputed services.
- The requestor does not discuss or explain how payment of the requested amount would satisfy the requirements of 28 Texas Administrative Code §134.1.

The request for additional reimbursement is not supported. Thorough review of the documentation submitted by the requestor finds that the requestor has not demonstrated or justified that payment of the amount sought would be a fair and reasonable rate of reimbursement for the services in dispute. Additional payment cannot be recommended.

Conclusion

The Division would like to emphasize that individual medical fee dispute outcomes rely upon the evidence presented by the requestor and respondent during dispute resolution, and the thorough review and consideration of that evidence. After thorough review and consideration of all the evidence presented by the parties to this dispute, it is determined that the submitted documentation does not support the reimbursement amount sought by the requestor. The Division further concludes that the requestor failed to support its position that additional reimbursement is due. As a result, the amount ordered is $0.00.

ORDER

Based upon the documentation submitted by the parties and in accordance with the provisions of Texas Labor Code §413.031, the Division has determined that the requestor is entitled to $0.00 reimbursement for the disputed services.

Authorized Signature

		10/21/2011
Signature	Medical Fee Dispute Resolution Officer	Date

YOUR RIGHT TO REQUEST AN APPEAL

Either party to this medical fee dispute has a right to request an appeal. A request for hearing must be in writing and it must be received by the DWC Chief Clerk of Proceedings within **twenty** days of your receipt of this decision. A request for hearing should be sent to: Chief Clerk of Proceedings, Texas Department of Insurance, Division of Workers Compensation, P.O. Box 17787, Austin, Texas, 78744. The party seeking review of the MDR decision shall deliver a copy of the request for a hearing to all other parties involved in the dispute at the same time the request is filed with the Division. **Please include a copy of the *Medical Fee Dispute Resolution Findings and Decision*** together with any other required information specified in 28 Texas Administrative Code §148.3(c), including a **certificate of service demonstrating that the request has been sent to the other party**.

Si prefiere hablar con una persona en español acerca de ésta correspondencia, favor de llamar a 512-804-4812.